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603-624-6300 x135

Smarter Balanced results reviewed with adjusted data
Scores rise when “zeros” are removed from calculation

MANCHESTER — Superintendent Debra Livingston presented to the Board of School Committee adjusted Smart Balanced assessment (SBAC) results, which removed the scores of students who were eligible to take the assessment but didn't. Those students received a “zero” in each of the English/language arts and math portions of the SBAC. The zeros were included in the official state and district results released last fall.

“Many parents gave permission for their children not to take the Smarter Balanced assessment,” said Dr. Livingston. “But those students are still part of our population in the grades that took the tests and had to be counted. By removing the scores of zero for demonstration purposes, we get another perspective on how the students who took the assessment achieved.”

Students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 took the SBAC assessment for the first time last spring. The largest numbers of students who didn't take the SBAC last spring were in grade 11. Without the zeros, scores from all four high schools showed the most dramatic increases in the percentage of students who scored a three or higher.

- Central High School's English/language arts score jumped from a 37% with zeros, to 63% without zeros. Math results went from 22% to 39%.
- At Memorial High School, where the fewest number of juniors -- just 34.6% -- took the assessment, the English scores increased from 16% to 46%; math 6% to 17%.
- MST High School percentages increased from 15% to 67% in English and 4% to 21% in math.
- West High School's results in English increased from 30% to 47%, and 13% to 21% in math.

“The difference in numbers tells us is that if all students take the SBAC, we will get the most accurate picture of academic success and ways we can improve instruction,” said Dr. Livingston. “Since this is the first time our students have taken the computerized assessment, we still urge the community to view the 2015 SBAC scores with caution. Technical issues and unfamiliarity with the format could have affected the final results.”

The 2016 SBAC testing period begins in March.

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